

PART II

Population

Where Washington's People Live

Because of the influence of topography, climate, accessibility and recent industrialization, Washington's population is distributed unevenly throughout the state. Over two-thirds of the people live in the western portion, concentrated largely in the industrial cities of Puget Sound. The Olympic Mountains and Willapa Hills of the Coast Range and the Cascade Mountains stand out as sparsely populated areas in western Washington. The Willamette-Puget Sound Lowland, extending from Vancouver on the Columbia River northward to Bellingham near the Canadian border, is the major population belt of the state. It contains a fairly well-distributed rural population on its river deltas and rolling, glacial drift plains.

The mountains, hills, plateaus, irrigable valleys and dry climatic conditions cause a generally clustered pattern of population settlement in eastern Washington. Mountainous areas including the eastern Cascade Mountain slope, the Okanogan Highlands, the Blue Mountains and the Selkirks have but few people. Dryland and upland areas which cannot be irrigated, such as large portions of the Waterville Plateau, the Channelled Scablands and the hills of Yakima County, are thinly settled. Both rural and urban population is concentrated in the irrigated Yakima, Kittitas, Wenatchee, Okanogan and Walla Walla Valleys and in the Pasco and Quincy Basins. In the far eastern section--the Palouse Hills--the uniform soil, topography and moderate rainfall permits a more evenly distributed population. The industrialized Spokane metropolitan area and the rich agricultural Yakima Valley are the major population clusters of eastern Washington.

Growth of Population

Washington was explored by Spanish, Russian, British and American expeditions between 1592 and 1805 but no settlements occurred until 1810. Ownership of the area was disputed by America and Great Britain. A compromise, the Joint Occupancy Treaty of 1818, permitted both American and British fur traders and settlers to live north of the Columbia River. British interests (the Northwest Company and the Hudson Bay Company) established fur trading posts at Spokane and Walla Walla in 1810 and 1818. American claims were strengthened by the Lewis and Clark Expedition (1804-1805) and by the settlements at Fort Spokane, Okanogan and Astoria by the Pacific Fur Company. The British increased their influence as they established agricultural settlements at Fort Vancouver and Fort Nisqually between 1824 and 1833. Settlement by Americans north of the Columbia, although permitted by treaty, was discouraged by the Hudson Bay Company, which desired to maintain its fur trade monopoly.

A growing tide of American land settlers over the Oregon Trail during the 1840's changed the balance of control in favor of the United States. Most of the Americans settled in the Willamette Valley of Oregon. Unhindered by the British, several hundred American settlers moved northward across the Columbia into the Puget Sound country and soon outnumbered the British fur traders.

The conflict of interests was solved by the Oregon Treaty of 1846, which gave the United States the present area of Washington and established the Canadian boundary as it exists today. Oregon Territory (including all of the present state of Washington) was created in 1848 by Congress, with its capitol in Salem, Oregon. Settlers north of the Columbia met in 1851 at the Monticello Convention in present Longview, Washington and asked for a separate territorial government. Washington Territory was created March 2, 1851, with a capitol at Olympia on Puget Sound. Isaac I. Stevens was appointed as Governor.

Population growth was slow before 1860. Lack of roads, the long distance from the East, and the difficulty of clearing the dense forests of the Puget Sound country kept immigration to a minimum. Indian hostility prevented settlement in most of eastern Washington prior to 1858, and that tended to slow movement into the Puget Sound Basin. The Washington population was only 11,594 according to the 1860 Census.

In 1863, the Washington territorial boundaries were changed to the present state lines by the creation of Idaho Territory. The Census of 1870 was the first to follow the present boundaries, and it enumerated a population of 23,995.

Population grew rapidly from 1870 to 1890. New transcontinental railroads brought large waves of immigrants from the East and Europe. The completion of the Union Pacific to the Columbia River brought new settlers into southeastern Washington. When the Northern Pacific reached Spokane in 1880 and was continued on toward Puget Sound, settlers occupied the Palouse and Big Bend wheat lands and the Yakima Valley. In 1883, six new counties were created in eastern Washington. Expansion of coastwise shipping and lumbering built up the cities on Puget Sound and at Grays Harbor. Washington Territory was admitted to the Union as a state in 1889. The population at this time was 350,000.

The period 1900-1910 was a decade of rapid growth in which the state gained 624,000 persons, more than doubling to 1,141,990. Two other railroads, Great Northern and Chicago, Milwaukee and Saint Paul, reached Puget Sound in 1893 and 1909, respectively. The lumber industry and agriculture supported more people; land and timber seekers homesteaded free public domain lands in the mountainous areas. The Alaskan gold rush doubled Seattle's population within a decade. Railroads and ships brought large numbers of people from Europe who took up lumbering, fishing, mining and agriculture. Ranked numerically according to the 1920 Census, the largest foreign-born groups in the state were Canadians (42,000), Swedes (35,000), Norwegians (34,000), English (23,000), Germans (22,000), Italians (18,000), Finns (12,500), Russians (11,000) and Irish (9,000).

Between 1910 and 1940 population grew at a slower but steady rate. The increase was about 20,000 per year. The lumber industry began to decline after 1929. Reduced employment and a growing scarcity of land were reflected in a slower rate of population growth. However, during the 1930's, many farmers from the Great Plains drought areas moved overland to Washington seeking farming opportunities.

The 1940-1950 decade brought the greatest increase in Washington history. Primarily an overland movement of laborers to new defense industries, it resulted in an increase of 642,772 in ten years, raising the state population to 2,378,963 in 1950. Most of the new growth was in the industrial metropolitan districts in King, Pierce, Kitsap, Clark and Spokane Counties and at the Federal atomic works in Benton County.

Urban and Rural Population

In 1870 the entire population of Washington was living in rural areas--in villages and on farms. By 1900, 211,477 of the population of Washington, or 40.8 percent, were living in urban areas. In 1950, according to the Census definition of "urban" which includes residents of towns of 2,500 and larger, 1,503,166 persons, or 63.2 percent, were living in urban areas. And over 52 percent lives in three standard metropolitan areas comprised of Seattle, Tacoma, Spokane and their surrounding suburban cities and towns. This trend follows the national pattern.

Table 2.- Population of Washington
1860-1955

Year	Population
1860	11,594
1870	23,955
1880	75,116
1890	357,232
1900	518,103
1910	1,141,990
1920	1,356,621
1930	1,563,396
1940	1,736,191
1950	2,378,963
1955	2,580,000

Sources: U.S. Census, Population;
Washington State Census
Board, April 1, 1955
Estimate

The rural population is predominantly rural nonfarm, consisting of 602,026 persons who live in the country, but do not operate farms. The rural farm population decreased about one-fifth between 1940 and 1950, and numbered only 273,771, or 11.5 percent of the state's total 1950 population of 2,378,963. As a result of the farm-to-city trend in Washington, about one person in ten is living on a farm and about six persons out of ten are living in a town or city larger than 2,500.

According to the 1955 estimates of the Washington Census Board, the ten leading cities of Washington ranked as follows: Seattle (555,000), Spokane (182,000), Tacoma (156,000), Yakima (43,000), Vancouver (41,950),

Bellingham (35,700), Everett (34,100), Bremerton (32,200), Walla Walla (25,400) and Longview (23,500).

Population of Jefferson County

In 1955 Jefferson ranked thirty-first among Washington counties with an estimated population of 9,400 people. Growth has been somewhat irregular because of fluctuations in nonfarm employment although population did grow steadily between 1860 and 1890. Between 1890 and 1940 there were ups and downs related to fluctuations in logging, lumbering and government payrolls. Decline of forest industries and movement of workers to other areas of western Washington resulted in a drop from 8,340 to 6,560 inhabitants between 1910 and 1920. Establishment of a pulp and paper plant at Port Townsend and increased Army-Navy expenditures on defense installations in addition to more tourist trade

were factors which resulted in a growth peak of 11,600 persons by 1950. In the 1950's there was a cut back in defense employment which caused county population to go down to 9,400 by 1955. Paper manufacturing, tourist trade and a dairy-poultry type of agriculture have had a stabilizing influence on the county in recent years.

Jefferson County is more urban than rural with about 52 percent of the inhabitants living in one city--Port Townsend. (The Census defines urban population as those living in towns or cities of 2,500 or more persons.) Historically, a majority of the county's residents have been urban or rural-nonfarm living in Port Townsend, Port Ludlow, Chimacum and Quilcene. In the Census of 1950, there were 11,618 inhabitants of which 59 percent were urban, 31 percent rural-nonfarm and 10 percent rural-farm. One out of ten persons in the county lived on a farm in 1950 and the farm population totaled 1,100, ranking thirty-seventh in the state.

Table 3.- Population of Jefferson County
1860-1955

Census Year	Population	Percent Rural	Percent Urban
1860	531	100	0
1870	1,268	100	0
1880	1,712	100	0
1890	8,368	45.5	54.5
1900	5,712	39.7	60.3
1910	8,337	49.9	50.1
1920	6,557	56.6	43.4
1930	8,346	52.3	47.7
1940	8,918	47.5	52.5
1950	11,618	40.7	59.3
1955	9,400	47.9	52.1

Source: U. S. Census, Population

Port Townsend is the only place in Jefferson County incorporated as a city under state laws. Since the earliest days of settlement when it was a customs port and a favorite anchorage for vessels plying the coast trade, it has had the major part of the county's population. Population was low in the 1920's at the end of the logging and sawmilling period. The city's population reached a new high in the World War II years because of increased Army and Navy personnel stationed within the strategic area commanding entry to Puget Sound. By 1958 Port Townsend was estimated to have 4,600 residents.

Table 4.- Population of Incorporated Places
Jefferson County, 1910-1958

Incorporated City or Town	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1958
Port Townsend	4,181	2,847	3,979	4,683	6,888	4,600

1/ Population for 1958 is estimate of the Washington State Census Board, April 1, 1958.

Source: U. S. Census, Population

Jefferson County has been a melting pot of a variety of foreign immigrants as well as a large number of settlers from other states. Most of the immigrants came directly from Europe by sea. In early settlement periods crew members of vessels from Europe left their ships and took up land. In the Census of 1890 the population of Port Townsend and Jefferson County was highly international with 3,700 foreign-born immigrants. Over 44 percent of the residents were from Europe, Canada and Asia. Largest nationality groups among the immigrants were English-Scotch, Canadians, Irish, Swedish, Norwegian, German and Italian. By 1920 the foreign-born proportion of the population amounted to 25 percent. According to the Census of 1920, many immigrants were from Scandinavian countries and Germany. Most of these came to work in the forest industries of the Olympic Peninsula and later became part-time farmers on cut-over lands.

Jefferson County is preponderantly Caucasian in racial characteristics. Its non-Caucasian population in 1950 included 264 American Indians of the Klallam, Chimacum, Quileute, Quinault and Queets Indian groups. A majority of these live on the Pacific Coast strip of Jefferson County within the Hoh and Quinault Indian Reservations. The county ranked fifteenth in Indian population in the state in 1950.

Table 5.- Foreign-Born White Population, Jefferson County
1890, 1920 and 1950

Country of Birth	1890	1920	1950
England and Wales....	405	119	76
Scotland.....	108	53	33
Northern Ireland.....	--	--	--
Ireland (Eire).....	357	78	19
Norway.....	313	236	76
Sweden.....	351	247	70
Denmark.....	94	51	30
Netherlands.....	11	11	8
Switzerland.....	34	18	--
France.....	32	17	5
Germany.....	336	155	95
Poland.....	58	11	6
Czechoslovakia.....	4	--	1
Austria.....	37	21	10
Yugoslavia.....	--	11	1
Russia (U.S.S.R.)....	125	30	7
Finland.....	--	50	13
Italy.....	313	48	21
Canada-French.....	--	12	14
Canada-Other.....	551	180	155
All other countries..	589	85	63
Totals	3,716	1,433	703
Percent foreign-born.	44.4	25.0	6.0

Source: U. S. Census, Population

In economy and employment Jefferson County is primarily nonagricultural. Agriculture is only fifth in total employment and only about 8 to 9 percent of self-employed persons and those drawing wages and salaries are supported directly by agricultural production. Manufacturing, mainly of paper and wood products, is the main source of income and wages. About 30 percent of all workers are in manufacturing. Commercial trades such as professional services and retailing are the second and third main fields of employment, amounting to 15 percent in retail-wholesale stores and 20 percent in professional services. Government employment in city, county, state and federal services is important, accounting for over 10 percent. In recent years, employment in general farm work, crop growing, harvesting and dairying has been reduced by increasing mechanization.

Table 6.- Employment of the Population
Jefferson County, 1950

Types of Employment	Male Workers	Female Workers	Total Workers	Percent of Workers
<u>Total employed workers</u>	2,323	867	3,190	100.0
Agriculture.....	232	46	278	8.7
Forestry and fisheries.....	88	13	101	3.2
Mining.....	17	--	17	.4
Construction.....	218	3	221	6.9
Manufacturing.....	815	119	934	29.5
Transportation.....	72	8	80	2.5
Retail and wholesale stores.....	272	218	490	15.4
Miscellaneous services.....	309	320	629	19.7
Public administration (government employment).....	233	100	333	10.4
Other employment.....	67	40	107	3.3

Source: U. S. Census, Population